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**NEWS RELEASE**

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***Smokeless Doesn't Mean Harmless! Stop Spitting During "Through With Chew" Week Feb. 12-19***

When it comes to tobacco, smokeless doesn't mean harmless! In fact, smokeless tobacco (snuff, dip and chewing tobacco) can be every bit as dangerous and addictive as lighting up a cigarette.

That's why it is time to be "Through with Chew!" The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) and the Tobacco Education and Prevention Program (TEPP), along with Delta Dental of Arizona Foundation, are taking part in a nationwide, week-long effort on Feb. 12-19 to build awareness about the dangers of smokeless tobacco, and to help smokeless tobacco users quit dipping and chewing for good.

A goal of "Through with Chew" is showing smokeless tobacco users – and those tempted to try it – that a pinch between your cheek and gums *is not* a safe alternative to lighting up a cigarette. In fact, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), it is estimated that a normal, 30-minute dip of smokeless tobacco delivers the same amount of nicotine as smoking approximately three or four cigarettes. A report in the Journal of the American Medical Association adds that smokeless tobacco users dipping or chewing between eight and 10 times a day have a chance of being exposed to as much nicotine as people who smoke 30 to 40 cigarettes a day.

In the short-term, smokeless tobacco can short circuit your social life thanks to bad breath and stained teeth. But an ugly, smelly smile is the least of a smokeless tobacco user's worries. Using smokeless tobacco can lead to any of the following health conditions:

- Cancer of the mouth and pharynx
- Leukoplakia (white sores in the mouth that can lead to cancer)
- Gum recession, or peeling back of gums
- Bone loss around the teeth
- May also play a role in cardiovascular disease and high blood pressure

It all adds up to one simple fact – being "Through with Chew" could help save your life!

"I have seen it in my own patients. They think smokeless tobacco is harmless until I show them the changing precancerous cells in their mouth," Delta Dental of Arizona Foundation board member Dr. Jim Davis (Glendale) said. "Any one who uses chew, especially long-term or heavy users, should get an oral health check up. It could literally save a person's life."

**-MORE-**

**Through with Chew**

ADHS TEPP can help smokeless tobacco users quit and stay quit. For information about quitting and cessation counseling services throughout Arizona, visit [www.ASHline.org](http://www.ASHline.org) or call 1-800-55-66-222.

The ADHS TEPP provides outreach and services across the state including youth prevention education, community outreach, worksite education, healthcare provider training and cessation services. TEPP provided cessation services to more than 20,000 people in the last three years and thousands have quit using tobacco as a result of their support and services.

Delta Dental of Arizona Foundation has taken on the smokeless tobacco health issue as a fundamental initiative to be addressed among dentists and their office teams, as well as the community at large. In addition to educating the public about the dangers of smokeless tobacco, the Foundation has partnered with ADHS to improve the oral health of uninsured children by providing free dental sealants.

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**Additional materials for media including Cessation Tips and Fast Facts about health improvements for a tobacco user's body when they quit are available at [www.ashline.org](http://www.ashline.org)**